

Roxbury, March 24, 1874.

My dear Whittier:

I am always gratified to receive an approving word from you, not only because of our long friendship, (commenced more than forty-seven years ago!) but because I greatly respect your judgment, and am sure that you are not a dealer in complimentary phrases. Hence the pleasure which the receipt of your letter of the 20th inst. gives me.

Letters are coming to me from various quarters, of an import similar to yours. Friends and strangers alike accost me in the city, warmly grasp my hand, and pour out their thanks to me for my protest in the Journal against the laudation of the signer of the Fugitive Slave Law, in company with our lamented Sumner, by the Massachu-

setts Legislature now in session. This wide and hearty concurrence of views is a forcible commentary upon the preposterous action under condemnation. I am seriously in earnest in saying that the Fillmore resolutions ought to be rescinded; and I trust they will be, if not by the present, then by a subsequent Legislature. Had Fillmore died twenty-three years ago, the passage of those resolutions would have been in accordance with the disgraceful attitude of Massachusetts then taken in enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law on her soil; but since then, a slaveholding rebellion has been crushed, slavery abolished, personal liberty secured under the U. S. Constitution, to every inhabitant in the land, and a thorough change in the sentiments of the people of Massachusetts has professedly taken place. Therefore it is that Sumner is now everywhere honored and praised, and specially crowned for his untiring efforts to lift the despised negro out of

the mire of chattel degradation up to the height of complete American citizenship. My pulse quickens and my cheeks burn when I think of the adoption of such scandalous resolutions by a unanimous vote of both Senate and House of Representatives! Before that vote was taken, I went up to the State House, and conjured my colored friend J. B. Smith, and my old co-worker James N. Buffum, to be sure ~~at~~ meet the issue thus presented by a determined front; but the latter allowed the resolutions to pass without a word of dissent from him, and so did the former, after saying of Fillmore, "Father, forgive him!" I begged of J. B. S. to distinguish between forgiveness and glorification, but he failed to do so, and thus, as the only representative of his race in the Legislature, helped to stamp the official career of Fillmore as "entitling him to the affectionate remembrance of the American people, and an honorable place in the long line of their illustrious public servants"!

Wm Lloyd Garrison
1874

It seems to be sadly true, as you say, that "Fillmore outlived the memory of his infamy"; but for abolitionists and their colored clients there is certainly no excuse. Moreover, you express the belief that "there were not ten men in our Legislature who took a thought of Fillmore's great crime." So it seems, and hence the necessity of the rebuke administered to them in the Journal. What is the eulogy bestowed upon Charles Sumner by such a stupid body worth? How must he, unquestionably a looker-on, be astonished at such conduct! And not less grieved ^{than} ~~and~~ astonished. Gen. Banks is responsible for it, and without excuse.

I hope you are in improving health. Be careful to "do thyself no harm!"
Your strongly attached friend
Wm. Lloyd Garrison!